Moonage Daydream

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/7703461.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Post-Episode: s03e13 The Wrath of the Lamb, #ItsStillBeautiful, Established Relationship, Hannibal secretly loves their dogs
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of Handprint Series, Part 7 of Hannibal Cre-Ate-Ive Prompts and Challenges
Collections:	#ItsStillBeautiful
Stats:	Published: 2016-08-07 Words: 1,973 Chapters: 1/1

Moonage Daydream

by chcrsk, starkaryen

Summary

The morning after, Will reflects about their present and future life together.

Notes

This if for #ItsStillBeautiful - join us this week in the anniversary fest!! - and the third and final part of the Handprint Series. While it *could* be read as a standalone, we really encourage you to read the first two installments so you can understand everything.

See the end of the work for more notes

Will woke up to the sound of drums quickly followed by a piano filling the house, the music crawling up to the bedroom from downstairs. That had become a routine during the mornings. A way Hannibal used to politely let Will know it was time to wake up when he overslept. During the almost two years they had been living there - after what seemed like a lifetime of healing and traveling, or better said, running off -, Hannibal had slowly been purchasing the kind of things that made a house a home. Paintings, books, rare (and presumably madly expensive) kitchenware, plants, culinary herbs, a piano, tools and fishing equipment - much to Will's surprise, after asking him what he wanted- and records. Lots of records. Some of them were to be expected: Mahler, Bach, Händel, Stravinsky, Wagner, Verdi, Puccini, Tallis, Donizetti… However, Will found himself giving a skeptical stare to the newly acquired albums of Johnny Cash, Dean Martin, Ella Fitzgerald, Armstrong, Morricone, Miles Davis, The Doors, Pixies, Violent Femmes, Queen, The Stooges, Brigitte Bardot, Jacques Brel, The Smiths or The Velvet Underground. At first, Will thought that it was an attention towards him, but eventually, he discovered that much of them suited both him and Hannibal tastes. When the first David Bowie's record arrived, they spent one entire evening discussing which Bowie was better. Will was adamant with his preference for the early 70's, while Hannibal gave him what could pass for a lecture in favor of the Berlin trilogy, arguing (not without some smugness) that he visited Berlin during those years and that you could feel the city on the albums. Then Will said with a little smirk that if he was old enough to visit Berlin during the late 70's his opinion couldn't be trusted because he could be senile. That night Will said ' *I love you* ' for the first time. Three days later Hannibal arrived with their first adopted dog. They called her Ziggy.

Will dragged his hand across the cold sheets beside him as he stretched out and yawned. What stopped him from lingering in bed even longer and get up immediately was the sound of a bark coming from outside. Will put on the sweater he had in the chaise lounge and approached the closed window. Outside, Hannibal was kneeling in front of his tulips, squashing the dirt with his gloved hands. The picture struck Will even if he had seen it many times before. It wasn't different from the image of Hannibal introducing his hands inside a man on a gurney at that ambulance a million years ago. The same focused look, a certain determination in his eyes. Of course, at this point, Will knew that for Hannibal there wasn't much difference between manipulating a rose bush and an human body. Just another degree of difficulty. He only saw those hands shaking at one particular kind of situation, which made him proud, though he would never admit it. Will cocked his head, marveled at the capacity of the other man to keep himself clean in spite of the circumstances. The white rolled up shirt Hannibal was wearing, along with his blonde-grey hair was a sharp contrast against the dark dirt and the bright green grass around the flowers. It was such a normal, easy scene, and he would never get completely used to seeing Hannibal like this.

Will remembered the previous night's conversation, and for a second he felt a lump in his throat. Will wasn't lying about anything; he *loved* Hannibal, he didn't fight the fact anymore. They loved each other and maybe that was enough. Maybe. And maybe it wasn't. He couldn't help but think that this (their routines, their home, the flowers, the dogs, the records) was precarious. They were living at a dollhouse. A dainty fantasy. A place was made by them, for them, together. Will felt as if he were in one of those dreams where you know, in the back of your mind, that you aren't awake. The peace they lived in now felt almost like an

armistice, a fragile balance in the blade of a knife. It wasn't different from that moment in front of the Primavera, both of them reaching a tacit ceasefire in order to be with the other. The only difference appeared to be that, this time, Hannibal deliberately chose to ignore it. He continued building the dollhouse, making plans, disregarding what they are and how they would always be prone to hurt each other over and over again.

Will bit his lower lip and was about to turn around, but in that moment another bark rang from the outside, and he looked down to the garden again. The dogs trotted towards Hannibal, Cosme carrying the big plastic bone they had, and the other two trying to take it from his mouth without managing it. Hannibal turned and lifted a finger, and the three dogs sat at the same time, Cosme throwing the toy to his feet. When Hannibal took it, he swung it a little above the dogs to tease them, and they went crazy. Cosme barked at him while Ziggy went around himself and Daisy, the smallest dog, jumped high but didn't take the toy from Hannibal's hand.

Will laughed at the scene, Hannibal finally throwing the toy and turning to his flowers with a little smile on his lips. Will felt his chest tightening and sighed, this time turning in earnest to go to the bathroom.

By the time he walked downstairs, a bunch of fresh flowers carefully arranged in a vase indicated the gardening was finished. Will headed to the kitchen, where Hannibal was cooking breakfast while crooning *Hang onto yourself.* He looked as radiant and happy as usual, the previous day's melancholy already forgotten. Cosme was sitting next to him, staring at the stove with a serious look.

"He's not going to move until you give him a treat, you know that don't you?"

Hannibal looked at him, a fond smile in his lips, his hair gracefully swinging in his forehead.

"Good morning, Will. Of course I know. Cosme is very tenacious. He's a Médici, after all."

"Sometimes I think you actually believe that."

"That wouldn't be strange. Didn't I tell you I'm officially insane?"

Will laughed and approached him, resting a hand in his lower back and resting his chin on Hannibal's shoulder, whispering to his ear "Just a thousand times."

Hannibal smiled like a kid and focused back on the stove.

"Set the table, please? And change the record, it's already ending."

Will shook his head teasingly and mouthed a ' *no* ' right before smiling and taking the tablecloth from one of the drawers. Hannibal had prepared toasts and croissants. After changing the album and taking a seat at the table, Will ate one with butter and peach jam and another with ham and cheese under the watchful eye of the three dogs.

"I saw you working on the flowers. They look beautiful," Will said while he took a sip from his coffee.

“Thank you. The rain was good for the ground. However, I’m a little worried about the tulips. They are supposed to be flowering by now.”

“So goodbye to our plans of collapsing the economy. I expected to trade a bunch of tulips for a boat,” Will pointed after eating the last piece of his croissant, trying to maintain a serious expression and failing.

“I assure you, that would be possible. They are Rembrandt tulips,” Hannibal said as if that was explanation enough.

“The only idea that affirmation gives me is that you chose the variety only for the name.”

“The Rembrandts are one of the varieties affected by a mutation. During the tulip mania the most valuable bulbs were those infected with a virus. The virus causes the flowers to change their single color pattern in intricate stripes, featherings or flame-like effects of different colors on the petals. It was the case of the *Semper Augustus* .”

Will nodded faintly, “A speculator offered 12 acres for a bulb of those. The freaks suddenly became valuable.”

Hannibal looked distractedly at his fingers, tapping on the table as if creating imaginary music compositions different than the one still sounding in the speakers. “Tulips affected by the virus were called *broken* . ” He smiled slightly before continuing. “While the virus produced the most beautiful streaked flowers, it also weakened the plants, so it was a risk to cultivate the bulbs. What made the tulips feeble and unstable also made the flamboyant flowers highly coveted. They took a lot of dedication and time. That’s why nowadays the virus is almost eradicated from every tulip growers' field. They get a similar effect from breeding.”

They were silent after that, Hannibal focused back on his breakfast. Will observed him for a long moment as Hannibal took another bite from the toast and then lifted his mug, seemingly unbothered by Will’s stare. “You know Hannibal, you aren’t being precisely subtle here.”

The tapping ceased and Hannibal looked right into his eyes. “Well. I have never been, I suppose,” he paused, a slight smirk that he couldn’t hide from him curving his lips upwards for a moment. But then, his expression turned serious. “And... I apologize. You know I have days like yesterday,” Hannibal said, lowering his voice.

Will shifted in the chair and leaned closer to the edge and Hannibal. He put his hand on Hannibal’s nape and brushed the short hair there with his thumb.

“Don’t apologize for that, Hannibal. If you want to ask for forgiveness do it for giving two historical and yet metaphorical dissertations in less than 24 hours.”

Hannibal rose an eyebrow and faked an offended look as he dropped his eyes from Will’s to his lips. Will smiled and closed the distance between them. He closed his eyes and caressed Hannibal’s nose bridge with the tip of his own. Will felt Hannibal’s breath on his lip. The fingers in Hannibal’s neck closed to grab gently at his nape as he cocked his head to kiss him, a tentative touch of lips on lips at first, and then Hannibal opening up to him. He sucked on

his lower lip as Hannibal moved his hands to cup Will's jaw. When they parted, Will sighed and rested his forehead to the other man's and stayed like that for a long time, Hannibal's fingers caressing his curls, and their breaths merging in the space between their mouths.

Hannibal stood then, picking up the dishes and heading to the kitchen, once again his resolute and unconcerned self. "So, hurry up, the day just begun. I want to go to the town, maybe you could come with me? I think there is business that may require both of our attention."

The dogs got up from their spot beside the table and followed him, wagging their tails and lolling their tongues in anticipation of the previsible - and despite what Hannibal believed, not so secret - treats.

Will was supposed to help him with the cleaning, but he remained seated, looking through the window to their garden, Heroes playing softly in the background. He touched his lips absently.

Despite their conversation and how peaceful their morning was, Will felt once again the lump in his throat, and let out a long sigh. Will knew nothing at all was solved. He was aware now, as well as he had always been in all their time together, that everything could blow up at any time.

But even if his head told him that, he couldn't find a single reason to worry about in that instant. At this precise moment, he thought while getting up and taking the remains of their breakfast, he could simply choose to be happy. They could be what they are together. Even if it was just for one day.

End Notes

If you want to know more about what Hannibal talks about, you can find more information about the Tulip mania here, and here.

Also, the records that play during the fic are "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars (1972)" and "Heroes (1977)".

Lastly, but not less important, we want to thank everyone who read and supported this series. This will be (for now?) the end of Handprint, but who's to say Chococriskis and I won't return with another story in the future! :)

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